



**Community
Transport at**



Community Transport Newsletter No.3 November 2020

TAS has provided expert advice, guidance and support for the CT sector for over 30 years. This general newsletter follows from our well-received COVID-19 coverage between April & September 2020. Please let us know of any items that might of interest to the wider CT sector.

COVID-19 Vaccination Plans

In a letter dated 9 November NHS England has briefed the CCGs, GPs, and general practice teams about making “urgent preparations” for a COVID-19 vaccination programme. The letter states: “Our plans for deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine build on the tried-and-tested rollout plans for influenza vaccine, which we deploy every autumn. Given the uncertainty over whether, and when, a vaccine may be approved, we are planning to be ready from any date from December with mass vaccination more likely in the New Year...Our shared ambition is for general practice to remain fully open and accessible to all patients. We also recognise that the additional workload of a COVID-19 vaccination programme may require practices to prioritise clinical activity...We also recognise that running a potential COVID-19 vaccination programme requires ‘all hands to the pump’ and pragmatism. We encourage systems to maintain and develop local ways of maximising joint working between PCNs and their community partners, making every contact count, e.g. in relation to housebound patients...Designated sites will need to be able to deliver a vaccination service seven

days per week including bank holidays between 8am and 8pm if vaccine supply allows.” Although quantities of vaccine available are uncertain, the initial plan is for around 10m individuals in the most high-risk groups to be vaccinated immediately. This creates an immediate logistical challenge around transport for those who might struggle to get to a vaccination centre – and two stage vaccinations further increase the need for transport. The role of CT services to get people to vaccination centres will be of obvious importance to the sector. We suggest that CT operators contact their CCGs to try to introduce their services into the planning mindset. We also recommend that they send information to every GP in their operational area making clear that they are offering this service, so that they can pass it on to individual patients who contact them and through their own bookings. This is a critically important task over the next few months and the CT sector should be ready to play its part in this unprecedented effort. We expect similar arrangements to be put in place in Wales, NI and Scotland.



Changes to Law on Minibus Tyres

DfT has announced changes to the legal requirements on tyres that will apply to all minibuses. DfT advises: “Tyres aged 10 years and older will be banned from lorries, buses and coaches on roads in England, Scotland and Wales...The ban follows an extensive investigation, including research commissioned by the Department for Transport, which indicates ageing tyres suffer corrosion which could cause them to fail. The move will make it illegal to fit tyres aged 10 years or older to the front wheels of lorries, buses and coaches, and all wheels of minibuses. The secondary legislation will be laid in the autumn and will also apply to re-treaded tyres – with

the date of re-treading to be marked – making the age of the tyre clearly visible.”
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-bans-old-coach-bus-and-lorry-tyres-from-roads-in-new-measures-to-improve-road-safety>



Community Connexions in Gloucestershire is Seeking Volunteers

SoGlos writes: “Providing essential transport for people of all ages, Community Connexions is recruiting more volunteer drivers to help older, disabled and rurally isolated people get to where they need to go. Whether they need to attend an urgent health appointment, visit family or do their weekly shop, community transport volunteers provide an invaluable service for people who would otherwise struggle to get around. With its volunteer base hit hard by the Coronavirus pandemic, the charity is urging people from Gloucestershire to pledge their help. No previous experience is required, with Community Connexions offering full training to ensure their volunteers can safely provide for the local community. Anyone who is friendly and willing to learn, with a full UK driving licence and their own vehicle, is welcome to join the team – with all expenses covered. For more information, and to volunteer, call Community Connexions on (0345) 6805029, email info@communityconnexions.org.uk or visit www.communityconnexions.org.uk.”
<https://www.soglos.com/business/49118/Community-Connexions-is-looking-for-volunteer-drivers-in-Gloucestershire>



Dundee CT Recognised in Volunteer Awards

Dundee Volunteer Awards 2020 has been reported in The Courier as follows: “The Volunteer of the Year accolade was handed to Francis Smith, from Dundee Community Transport. Francis has volunteered on the Out & About bus since its launch back in November 2018. The bus is aimed at the over-65 community and helps get people out and about and prevent social isolation. He volunteers from 9.30am until about 2pm five days a week.” Dundee CT added on its website: “We were delighted to learn that Francis Smith our passenger assistant on the ‘Out & About’ bus has won the Volunteer of the Year Award 2020. Francis is a fantastic volunteer and goes above and beyond the usual role of a volunteer. He has volunteered on the bus since its launch back in November 2018. He works Monday – Friday from 9.30am – 2pm every day and has only missed a few days! Well done Francis! Everyone at Dundee Community Transport is so pleased for you and we can’t wait until we can get the bus back up and running some time in the future.”

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/local/dundee/1671784/dundee-amateur-football-club-among-those-recognised-for-remarkable-volunteer-work/> and <http://www.dundeecommunitycars.org/volunteer-awards-2020/>



Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards

More awards for deserving CT volunteers have been presented in North East Scotland, as reported by the Evening Express: “The virtual ceremony on Tuesday saw winners recognised for a wide range of work. Volunteer Driver/Escort of the Year was jointly-awarded to Norman Kinnaird of Huntly Community Minibus and Dave McLauchlin from Aberdeen Cyrenians. In his role with the Huntly Community Minibus, Norman has been a lifeline for many in the area and has worked tirelessly during the pandemic to

promote and operate the vehicle. Those who rely on the service praised Norman for 'going out of his way' and for providing social interaction for many who were isolated. As a volunteer driver for more than six years with Aberdeen Cyrenians, Dave has been a vital part of their emergency food service during Covid-19. Each winner was awarded a £250 prize donated by Colin Lawson Transport. A special prize for notable mention was donated by Live Life Aberdeenshire and was awarded to Rachel Milne of North East Transport Training. The awards are supported by Health & Transport Action Plan (HTAP) partner organisations across public, third and commercial sectors in Grampian. Dave's work to collect food donations meant that the Cyrenians could continue to replenish stocks to meet the high demand for the service. The Community Contribution (Organisation) Award was presented to North East Rider Volunteers Scotland (NERVS). The group of more than 250 volunteers provides an essential service transporting medical supplies, treatments and equipment. Their efforts during the pandemic expanded to include the coordination of emergency prescription deliveries, as well as transporting doctors and nurses who faced difficulties in getting to work. Special mention was also given to Aberdeenshire Council officers Charles Mackintosh (Duty Officer) and Tracey Morris (Facilities Officer) who went the extra mile as part of their work helping those shielding, by delivering food and prescriptions."

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/north-east-volunteer-drivers-recognised-for-their-vital-service/> and <https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/volunteer-drivers-across-grampian-recognised-for-their-vital-service-216692/>



CT in West Lothian Benefits from Third Sector Community Support Fund

West Lothian Council is set to provide a £180,000 grant to community transport under a new funding scheme, which, according to the Linlithgow Gazette: "aims to open up the application process to all Third Sector organisations, to help address the key issues facing communities. The focus of the new grant scheme is around key issues identified as being under pressure because of Covid-19. These are income and employment, health and mental wellbeing and homelessness, with particular emphasis on supporting our most vulnerable communities. Executive councillor for voluntary organisations Kirsteen Sullivan said: 'The £400,000 Third Sector Community Support Fund will play a major role in supporting our amazing voluntary sector in West Lothian. This new approach to funding has been developed in partnership with local voluntary organisations, to help us work together to respond to the challenges we face in West Lothian.'"



**West Lothian
Council**

DVSA Announcement Changes for November Lockdown

DVSA has issued a bulletin which explains how vehicle testing and vocational theory tests may be affected by the new lockdown status from 5 November.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/2a9d73e>



Community Health Shuttle in New Zealand

The Waikato Times has highlighted a Red Cross initiative in New Zealand: "For over 50 years the P t ruru Branch of Red Cross provided transport for those unable to get to medical appointments. But a national change in direction away from community transport earlier this year put the service, which includes two vans based in P t ruru and two in Tokoroa, in jeopardy. Not wanting to let it go, secretary Giny van Honk said members came to the rescue. 'At the branch meeting where this decision was discussed the immediate feeling by all members was "this is not going to happen here" and "we won't let the people in our community down",' she said...This has led to establishing the South Waikato Community Health Transport Inc. (SWCHT) with the purpose of running the South Waikato Community Health Shuttle...SWCHT want to reassure the people in the South Waikato community that the community health shuttle will continue its service,' she said. 'The same friendly coordinators will take your bookings, the same friendly, compassionate team of drivers will take you to your appointments in the same vehicles...'"

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/south-waikato-news/300139842/health-shuttles-new-face-with-same-team>



Nidderdale CT Drivers Nominated for Finals of Yorkshire's Big Thank You Awards

JPI Media has launched the inaugural Big Thank You Awards in North Yorkshire: "Over the past few months, we have seen the heroic efforts of so many key workers, neighbours, communities, families and friends helping to keep us safe and healthy. These awards will be an opportunity for us,

and the public, to say a big thank you to those that have done so much to help others during this pandemic. The event will take place as a virtual awards on Friday the 11th December 7pm. Everyone in Yorkshire will be able to tune in and watch the Big Thank You winners get their awards LIVE." Nidderdale Plus Community Transport's drivers are among the finalists and the public has been invited to vote for them. The citation reads: "A team of nine volunteer drivers from a community hub in Nidderdale run a community transport service using a community car. During the crisis they borrowed a minibus from fellow local charity, Dementia Forward and gave their time free to transport residents to hospital and GP appointments, deliver prescriptions to people self-isolating, transport essential health equipment for the North Yorkshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group to care homes in Harrogate and GP practices and to transport food parcels, food shopping, library books and jigsaws and other supplies to support people in their own homes."

<https://bigthankyouawards.co.uk/bigthankyouawards2020/en/page/home>



East Teignmouth CT Fund Raising Effort

Teignmouth Today reports: "Cllr John Petherick who was born in Dawlish has the honour of being chairman of Teignbridge. During his year as chairman, Cllr Petherick and his wife Cllr Linda Petherick have chosen East Teignbridge Community Transport Association as their Charity of the year. They are hoping to raise money towards the purchase of a new vehicle. Cllr Petherick said 'we are raising funds for a specifically adapted bespoke minibus, costing more than £65,000. It is a fully equipped wheelchair accessible vehicle, enabling any person to travel anywhere.' Travelling by minibus is a great way to meet new people, make friends and see other towns and villages, while getting those daily tasks done, which could include,

banking, shopping, and everyday essential chores. The charity helps people to manage their everyday lives and keep their independence, with the bonus of being provided with door to door service. Without these vehicles Community Transport simply cannot provide the services, which supports over 1,200 individual people in the East Teignbridge area. In addition, over the last financial year they provided 401 group bookings, which would not be possible without this essential vehicle. A spokesman said: 'In these strange times Community Transport need all the support they can get from the community they serve.' If anybody would like to donate to the chairman's charity please contact Cllr John Petherick on

john.petherick@teignbridge.gov.uk or Cllr

Linda Petherick on

linda.petherick@teignbridge.gov.uk and

they will give you the details of how to donate."

<https://www.teignmouth-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=119761&headline=Chairman%20aims%20to%20get%20things%20moving%20for%20East%20Teignbridge%20Community%20Transport%20Association§ionIs=news&searchyear=2020>



Hour Community's Hero

The East Anglian Daily Times has profiled the work of Nick Corke in Framlingham:

"Charity leader Nick Corke says Framlingham is a special place with a strong spirit of togetherness, as shown by the success of Hour Community. The small Suffolk charity supports people from the town and surrounding villages in a whole range of ways, from community transport to meal deliveries, with people pulling together to help one another. CEO Mr Corke has been at the heart of it all since the start, but insists: 'It's not about me and I'm not a hero - there's a whole group of people involved. We can do so much as a community.' As its name

suggests, Hour Community is all about giving up your time for others. The initiative began in 2011, set up by Framlingham Rotary Club. 'The original idea was for people to pledge an hour of their time to help other people, by doing DIY and jobs for them,' Mr Corke said. 'People could also pledge an hour of their salary instead.' The idea really caught on - and, from initially organising a 'few odd jobs', Hour Community quickly became so much more. Mr Corke paid tribute to the charity's whole team, volunteers and supporters. He also thanked his wife Anne, who supports him by working full-time and got involved in things like delivering meals during lockdown."

<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/adnams-community-leader-nick-corke-of-hour-community-1-6905484>



Loch Ness Hub Funding Success

In an earlier newsletter we had noted the proposal for a Hub in the Loch Ness area that was to offer a community transport scheme. The Press & Journal reports that the "project was launched last month with hopes of raising between £50,000 and £110,000 and has now reached the upper target. It is proposed the Loch Ness Hub will be a community transport, tourism information and travel facility and the base for baggage transfers. It will also promote and provide information and ticket sales for businesses and attractions within the Glen Urquhart and wider Loch Ness area, creating local employment and channelling surplus profits back into community projects. The project had been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but is now planned to be ready by spring 2021. It is proposed to purchase and incorporate an existing baggage handling and transfer service. The project was set up by the Glen Urquhart Rural Community Association (Gurca) following a successful bid for a community buy-out of the former Tourism

Information Centre in Drumnadrochit. So far £285,000 has been raised, including the income from the share offer. Hub secretary Carolyn Wilson, a founder member and trustee of Gurca, said: "We smashed it. We reached our top target so could not have hoped for anything better. We are thrilled to bits. The next steps now are just to get on with the work in completing the purchase of the building, starting to advertise for a manager and getting the place ready to start operations from next season." She said more than three quarters of the shares have been bought by local people: "It's a fabulous effort and demonstrates that the community is behind this and is backing the venture." The financial approach by the project has been recognised as a response to the ailing model of capitalism in The Herald: "Is capitalism broken? The question was being asked well before the outbreak of Covid-19, but the virus has added fuel to the debate as the pandemic has expanded social divides, widened gaps in inequality and spread angst among the population...The re-invention of business models is inevitable, but the scale and speed at which these transformations are taking place has truly been breathtaking. Covid-19 has forced everyone to get creative in coming up with workarounds to deliver their goods and services to the market, but what's important to customers – what they desire – has also changed...the Covid-19 crisis has changed that, as people look for ways to save the local spaces that they care about. Community Shares Scotland currently has three share offers in progress and a further six coming up in the next couple of months. It also recently completed a funding round on behalf of Loch Ness Hub, a community transport, tourism information and travel centre project set up by the Glen Urquhart Rural Community Association."

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands/2591866/fundraiser-to-create-tourism-and-transport-centre-at-loch-ness-smashes-target/>



Support in Action in Holsworthy
Cornish & Devon Post reports: "At the start of the pandemic, Sophie Sleeman, a student from Holsworthy, felt she wanted to do something to help those that were suffering from the consequences of the virus but wasn't sure what to do so she contacted Jon Hutchings who sits on both the town and district council. Jon then spoke to Mother Elizabeth Burke and former town councillor Nigel Kenneally and some ideas began to emerge. Holsworthy Covid-19 Mutual Aid (HC19MA) was created overnight and set about determining the needs of the community. They established the people of Holsworthy and surrounding eighteen parishes were most in need of prescription medication deliveries from Lloyds and Boots in Holsworthy, food parcels and essential household items for those in need as a result of furlough or job loss; financial support and transport to hospital for urgent appointments. The group was delighted to receive funding from various local sources including the Holsworthy Hospital League of Friends, Waitrose (Holsworthy), Morrison's (Bude), the DCF fund, LiveWest, Torridge District Council and the National Lottery as well as many individual local donations. During lockdown volunteers manned a dedicated phone line and held a number of socially distanced activities to keep everyone's spirits up — including a lockdown gallery competition and an Easter egg hunt. Working together, Jon, Nigel and Mother Burke have kept HC19MA running for the benefit of the local community. They approached Holsworthy Rural Community Transport (HRCT) to ask for support, which was willingly given. Chairman of Holsworthy Rural Community Transport Martin Prentice said: '[We] immediately offered the group the one bus they asked for and indicated that, if needed, all five buses would be available at no cost to the group. It turned out that this transport has been key to what was to follow.' Martin added: 'As always, the community spirit of the people of Holsworthy has been fantastic and they have turned up in numbers to help in any way they could. No one has complained about anything and they have done whatever they have been asked to do — the Covid-19 group can be proud of what they have done and achieved for the

community.’ On behalf of HC19MA Jon said: ‘Holsworthy Rural Community Transport was approached and agreed to make one of their minibuses available to be driven by suitably qualified volunteers. The prescription service grew rapidly and 136 prescriptions were delivered in the first two weeks of operation and has totalled over 500.’ He added: ‘This operation made a huge difference to those vulnerable people who were isolating and who lived in deeply rural areas, this was a life-line for so many of them.’ In April about 77 food parcels were distributed with about 105 people benefitting and in total 2,205 meals along with 1,470 snacks were provided. Jon said: ‘The food parcels were essential to keep people going otherwise many would have gone hungry. The two essential things that made the whole activity possible and successful were the 100 volunteers that stepped up in the first week as soon as they were asked, who were prepared to do anything they were asked to do and not a single moan or complaint. The second was having the use of the HRCT minibuses without which this would have been a much more difficult operation and parts of it could not have been achieved.’”

<https://www.thepost.uk.com/article.cfm?id=115427&headline=Mutual%20Aid%20still%20available§ions=news&searchyear=2020>



Serving Northern Ireland – Community Transport during Coronavirus

CTA has produced a report on CT responses in Northern Ireland: “Community Transport in Northern Ireland has changed significantly since March. With social distancing and isolation measures in place, core services have predictably declined, with parallel impacts for both operators of CT services and their passengers.

To gather a more detailed picture, we conducted a series of interviews with our members in Northern Ireland to assess how services have shifted and to hear about the hard work operators have been doing to meet new needs. The report also shares some heartening stories from passengers, as well as local authorities and new community groups who have partnered with CTs in recent months. Report summary:

-) Like the rest of the UK, all passenger transport services have declined considerably between March and July, though some core services have resumed to some degree since restrictions changed in August
-) Where CTs have been unable to transport passengers, they have been delivering a wide array of essentials and staying in contact with users through the phone
-) All members interviewed were keen to emphasise their gratitude towards the Department for Infrastructure and DAERA for maintaining their funding, but urged that there needed to be an increase in funding levels for the next financial year to enable CT to continue to be viable.



Bill Freeman, CTA's Chief Executive, said: ‘I am so proud of what our CTA members in Northern Ireland were able to achieve in the spring lockdown and what they continue to do. In the face of challenging circumstances, community transport continues to work hard to deliver what is needed all over Northern Ireland. Our members are stepping up, adapting their services and delivering for their communities at this crucial time.’”

<https://ctauk.org/report-serving-ni-ct-during-covid/>

CTA Wales Appoints New Director

A new appointment has been announced by CTA - Rachel Burr takes up the position of Director for Wales in December. CTA says: "Rachel, who lives in Porthcawl, joins us from her role as Wales Campaigns Manager at Dogs Trust, and has worked in the charity sector for over 14 years in a variety of roles that aimed to influence change and support communities. During her time working for road safety charity Brake she campaigned for better and more accessible public transport options, has led national influencing work on a range of social policy topics for Citizens Advice and most recently led the Wales campaign team at Dogs Trust. 'I am incredibly excited about the opportunity to lead the Community Transport Association's work in Wales,' said Rachel. 'I'm from a rural area and know first-hand just how poor transport links limit the social and employment opportunities for people without access to a car. I have always been in admiration of the staff and volunteers who devote their time to providing a lifeline to communities through community transport.'"

<https://ctauk.org/new-director-for-wales/>



Zero Emission CT on Isle of Wight

Island Echo reports: "A project to provide zero-emission electricity to power a fleet of electric minibuses on the Isle of Wight has secured over £26,000 of grant funding. The Hero for Zero project, run by Wight Community Access was awarded the grant by the South West Energy Hub working with the Solent Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The funding will enable Wight Community Access to develop detailed technical and business plans to generate green electricity for a fleet of minibuses on the island. The Hero for Zero project is supported by Isle of Wight

Council and the local parish councils. Wight Community Access is a charity that runs bus services and community transport in the west of the Isle of Wight with a fleet of five minibuses. Its team of 50 active volunteers was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2016. It aims to convert its fleet of diesel minibuses to electric and generate its own green electricity to run the fleet. A hybrid of solar PV (photo-voltaic) panels and wind turbines would generate 80-100kWh of green electricity per day to power the fleet, with the possibility of the surplus being offered to other local charitable organisations for their electric vehicles...Michael Craig, Wight Community Access director, said: 'Our goal is clear – to keep our fleet relevant and attractive to our communities in the medium term whilst protecting our beautiful local environment. Many residents in our area rely on us to get to local retail, health and social amenities and the full support we have from our councils encourages us to see this project through. Although we have some expertise amongst our volunteers, we are most grateful for the help we have received from South West Energy Hub and Solent LEP which, through the professional support they provide, will give us the confidence to progress this vital project'". <https://www.islandecho.co.uk/island-funding-boost-for-zero-emissions-community-transport/>



HS2 Compensates Greatworth CT

An unlikely benefactor has been noted by the Banbury Guardian: "HS2 bosses are giving villagers in Greatworth access to a 16-seater community minibus as compensation for the impact of construction works for the high speed rail line. The village is close to the new HS2 line - so the HS2 Community and Environment Fund has awarded the Greatworth Community

Transport Association £75,000 to lease the minibus for three years during the main construction works. Many villagers have campaigned against HS2. The parish council signed a letter describing it as a 'white elephant'. which is backed by many other Banburyshire villages. Construction in the area will have an impact on local traffic routes so HS2 bosses said they hope the minibus service will benefit all residents and help overcome local difficulties. It will be equipped for disabled access with a wheelchair lift. The service will include a twice weekly run into nearby Brackley with access to doctors, dentists, shops and other local services. A number of village clubs and groups have indicated that they will use the minibus, as well as the local primary school and preschool. Richard Edwards, Chairman of the Greatworth Transport Association, said: 'The Greatworth Community Transport Association (GCTA) are absolutely delighted that our application to the HS2 Community and Environment Fund has been successful. The GCTA which is a charity is made up of volunteers from the village who have worked extremely hard for a long time to achieve this award. The construction phase of HS2 will be a challenge for our village but the introduction of a community minibus will enhance opportunities for all age groups. We feel it will bring us closer together making us a much stronger, vibrant, greener and cohesive community.'"

<https://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/business/hs2-giving-villagers-greatworth-access-minibus-service-compensation-impact-construction-works-3020349>



Bedfordshire CT Thanked by Lord-Lieutenant

Cranston & Marston Vale Chronicle reports: HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis has made a socially distant COVID-safe visit to Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) to thank the volunteers

and staff for their efforts during the pandemic. On the visit, the Lord-Lieutenant met with chief executive Tracy Cowan and those team members who were involved in supporting the communities during lockdown and who are continuing to do so in the ongoing pandemic. The Lord-Lieutenant heard how the charity BRCC has been supporting local councils as part of their Community Response Hubs. Also it provided help to vulnerable people in the community and those who were shielding. Using the Community Transport Team, BRCC was doing shopping and dropping it off to isolated residents. As a rural charity, BRCC works across Bedfordshire supporting communities in a number of different ways...Such as providing community transport...Chief executive Tracy Cowan said: 'It has been wonderful to welcome the Lord Lieutenant here today, and for her to meet our fantastic and dedicated staff members and volunteers...' HM Lord-Lieutenant Helen Nellis said: 'It was a pleasure to visit colleagues at BRCC to pay tribute to their work and to get an update on their activities. As Patron of BRCC, I am always so inspired when I speak with the volunteers and staff. They are at the very heart of our communities and have stepped up during the pandemic to help those in need. My sincere thanks to all at BRCC for their community spirit, commitment and dedication.'"

<https://cranfieldandmarstonvale.co.uk/central-beds-council/lord-lieutenant-visits-bedfordshire-rural-communities-charity/>



Ealing CT Celebrates the Hidden Heroes

Ealing CT has been profiling on its website the 'Hidden Heroes' of the community. Latest is Elizabeth Amzil, a former teacher who is now a dedicated carer for her 91-year-old mother and her sister. "When lockdown restrictions were relaxed,

Elizabeth was 'amazed' when ECT said it could help arrange a long-awaited, flexible and stress-free family day out for all three of them. 'We were so trapped and locked up here within the four walls, it was awful – we were scared to go out and about,' reports Elizabeth. 'Up until very recently, I've only been able to take my mother out in the wheelchair just up and down the road...I was looking on the ECT website, and I didn't realise how much they had expanded. I often saw the buses going around with different types of groups they were helping out, including people using wheelchairs. So I phoned up ECT and asked if there was any way that me and my sister could be in the car and follow Mum in one of their buses. I was astonished when they said they could take Mum and me and my sister on the bus since she is disabled and I am the main carer – and they would take us anywhere we liked within the borough! We've been on two of the trips now,' reports Elizabeth. 'Chiswick House with Kim driving and Kam as the assistant, and then we went to Kew, with Rob driving and Kim the assistant. ECT is able to strap mum in her chair, into the bus. I'm sitting next to her because she's anxious so every bump and jolt I can hold her hand, reassuring her all the time. It was an absolute Godsend because they had Sue in the bus as well. The crew were very careful and wearing masks. It was just amazing!...I hope we can continue to make use of ECT's services, it's something for us to look forward to... I just find it extraordinary that there is such an organisation – we were really stuck, to tell you the truth, really, really stuck. We had come to a full stop. And it was just a breath of fresh air to find ECT and be able to do something that we always used to do."

<https://ectcharity.co.uk/news/story/hidden-heroes-it-was-just-a-breath-of-fresh-air-to-find-ect>



CT Volunteer in Ilkley is celebrated

The Ilkley Gazette reports: "An Ilkley man is celebrating his 20th anniversary working with local charity Good Neighbours. When John Jewitt retired on medical grounds in May 2000 he felt bored and wondered what could occupy his future time. He decided to become a general charity volunteer with Ilkley Council for Voluntary Service and Good Neighbours, initially dealing with phone enquiries. Within a short period however John helped set up a community transport service with a minibus, by 2002 it had grown to the point where it required a full-time manager and two years later became a charity in its own right...paying tribute to John's efforts is colleague Mary Hamilton, Manager of the Ilkley office of Community Action Bradford and District who said: 'John personifies all that is great about volunteering in our community. He has brought his energy, knowledge and skills – not to mention his unique sense of humour to many volunteering roles with ICVS, Ilkley Good Neighbours and Ilkley Community Transport.'"

<https://www.ilkleygazette.co.uk/news/18849828.two-decades-charity-work-community-celebrated/>



Hagley's Dial-a-Ride is Relunched

After many months out of service, Stourbridge News has announced that the "dial-a-ride bus service is back in Hagley – and proving a big hit. It's under new management after the service was suspended at the start of the lockdown because of a mixture of Covid and the former company running it being taken over. But last week the service, which offers a lifeline to the elderly and those with mobility issues in the village, was relunched to packed buses. Well, packed

as far as they could be – Covid restrictions limit the 16-seater to just six passengers. But there's no shortage of demand as local people book ahead for trips to the shops at Stourbridge, Kidderminster and occasionally Longbridge. And soon a new service will be offered, picking up people from their homes and dropping them into the village centre. 'Residents have been really looking forward to it,' said Councillor Steve Colella. 'It helps fight the impact of isolation.' The bus is one of the benefits from around £100,000 for the village coming from New Homes Bonus money because of the amount of building development."

<https://www.stourbridgenews.co.uk/news/18833580.villages-100-000-investment-gone/>



Charity Commission Launches New Guidance for Trustees

The Charity Commission for England and Wales has published "a range of user-friendly guides for trustees. Launched in Trustees' Week 2020, the five, new 5-minute guides cover a 'core syllabus' of basic information that will help trustees run their charities effectively. Available in English and Welsh, they explain the fundamentals of:

- J controlling your charity's finances;
- J keeping 'on mission' and within the rules;
- J decision making;
- J spotting conflicts of interest and dealing with them;
- J sending information to the Commission and
- J what support you can get from them.

Good governance underpins the delivery of your charity's purposes to the high standards expected by the public."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-commission-news-issue-65/charity-commission-news-issue-65>



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Worcester Wheels Driver hailed Local Hero for Saving Life

Worcester News has featured a story which highlights the great value of CT as a frontline service: "A pensioner who was six hours away from death after falling in her home has thanked her 'knight in shining armour', a volunteer driver, for saving her life. Rosemary Frank, 91, was left on the floor of her bedroom for two days after a fall at her home in Kempsey. Her son told the Worcester News she was forced to eat soil from a nearby potted plant to sustain herself. Mrs Frank was only saved because Derek Cowdry, a volunteer driver for Worcester Wheels, decided to check in on her after she missed her regular trip to the hair salon. The 75-year-old driver said: 'It was unusual for Mrs Frank to arrange a lift and not use it, so I popped over to check on her. There was no response, so I knocked on the neighbour's door to see if anyone had a key. Eventually I found someone who did have one, and we went over to the house together. We found Mrs Frank on the floor of her bedroom – she was barely conscious. I phoned an ambulance and she was taken to hospital. I don't see what I did as a big thing, it is what, I hope, anyone would have done. I am just relieved that Mrs Frank is recovering well.' Mrs Frank sustained three fractures to her right wrist and was severely dehydrated and she said doctors told her that at the point Derek found her she would have been six hours away from death if nobody had saved her. Now, after a 10-day stay at Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Mrs Frank is recovering at home with the help of her beloved son, Richard. She said: 'The last thing I remember was speaking with my daughter in Canada on Sunday night, the next thing I know it was Tuesday and I was in hospital. I don't remember anything that happened for those two days or how I fell and injured myself. All I know is that if Derek hadn't had gone out of his way to help me, I would be dead. He saved my life, he is my knight in shining armour. I am now at home getting better with the help of my son, Richard. I also have carers come in

twice a day to help me, the NHS have been wonderful, but of course, the hero of this story is Derek." Dormston Cook, manager of Worcester Wheels, added: 'We are so glad Mrs Frank is recovering well and are so very proud of Derek for his dedication and courage.'

<https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/18859180.bu-s-driver-saves-worcester-woman-six-hours-death/?c=gq71ke>



Traffic Commissioner Updates

The Office of the Traffic Commissioner has issued updates which "include changes to the process for temporary Local Bus Service Registration variations in England, Scotland and Wales. The provision to allow short notice temporary variations will now continue beyond 4 January 2021 in view of the continuing uncertainty facing operators. This provision will be reviewed on 1 March 2021. After ten months of the fee being waived the £60 registration fee will be reintroduced for any temporary changes made from 4 January 2021. In England and Scotland, there will be changes to the notification periods from 4 January 2021. In addition, the updated advice note covers:

-) clarification of when a vehicle is off the road during periods of lockdown for the purposes of maintenance (Q7)
-) recognition of the extension of the furlough scheme until 31 March 2021

The Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Document No. 2 on Finance has been updated to reflect new financial standing levels for January 2021. The new levels will be £8,200 for the first vehicle and £4,550 for each subsequent vehicle."

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKOTC/bulletins/2aa6303>



Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain

Community Transport Glasgow changes direction during Covid-19

Providers of scheduling software 365 Response have included a case study on its website which outlines how Community Transport Glasgow was able to cope with the new demands of COVID-19: "In April 2019, CTG established a Transport Hub, which was a pilot project with NHS Lanarkshire to be used for the purpose of planning, scheduling and booking non-emergency patient transport (NEPTS) and non-patient transport services such as staff transport, specimens, records and theatre equipment. The Hub was also assisting with the scheduling and planning of CTG's own transport solutions. CTG Manager, Graham Dunn recognised that he had a requirement for a dispatch solution that could manage the process of booking and planning each journey and so began working with us, implementing the 365 Smart Platform to digitise his processes and automate route planning. Unfortunately, when the global Covid-19 pandemic hit, CTG transport services were heavily affected, due to the nature of the services provided and the demographic of the passengers and drivers. Many services were impacted by the need for passengers and drivers to shield and regular journeys were halted due to the government-mandated lockdown. This drastic change in circumstances and 'business as usual' prompted Graham to consider alternative services: 'due to the coronavirus pandemic many of our drivers were shielding and our regular service users were not able to travel to their usual services and activities, so we looked at ways we could redeploy our services to help out in the community. We have a fleet of 16 vehicles – 7 of which are fully electric – and we're partnered with 12 agencies across Glasgow. We began working with Third Sector organisations and Glasgow City Council to deliver food, prescriptions and activity packs, all scheduled through our 365 Smart Platform.

Our innovative system was able to adapt with the changing demand placed on CTG and to facilitate the new way of working...we have been working with a key partner in the distribution of food, Glasgow Community Food Network, to pick up wholesale food and deliver it to 15 local organisations for redistribution to those that need it. We schedule these journeys through the 365 Smart Platform and this helped us to plan 37 pickups, delivering to 116 places in June alone.' The busy Transport Hub was previously responsible for 800/900 journeys per month on behalf of NHS Lanarkshire, with approximately 80% of these being fulfilled by taxi services and 20% by third sector organisations. The impact of Covid-19 resulted in many taxi drivers self-isolating and heavy requirements for new resources to be put in place. Using the 365 Smart Platform, CTG was able to put new resources in place quickly. Graham commented 'with just a 24 hour turn around we were able to allocate journeys to third sector organisations. This quickly increased to over 1,100 journeys per month with over 80% being allocated to third sector organisations.'

<https://365response.org/case-study/community-transport-glasgow-changes-direction-during-covid-19/>



Community Infrastructure Levy Benefits Community Transport Lewes Area

Uckfield FM reports that "Lewes District Council has awarded nearly £70,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funding to a community transport charity to pay for a new minibus. Councillor Adrian Ross, chair of Lewes District Council, visited the CTLA charity at its Newhaven base to see the new minibus and find out more about its work. He said: 'CTLA provides a fantastic transport service for

local people who don't have access to private vehicles and find it difficult to use public transport. I'm delighted we have been able to support this award-winning charity through CIL funding as it is reliant on money from the public or through grants such as this to continue operating.' CIL is a charge that councils can make on new developments in their area to raise money towards local projects. Gina Bickerstaff, CTLA fundraising manager, said: "CTLA are extremely grateful for the CIL funding that assisted with the purchase of the new vehicle. It is funds like this that allow our frontline services to continue to assist the local community and afar. Our Dial-A-Ride services provide essential travel to many individuals and assist in the fight against social isolation and to reduce loneliness. We provide transport for many schools, transporting young people to enjoy and fulfil their daily routine. CTLA are proud to support those who are in need of our vital assistance especially at this current time. By providing an essential shopping and prescription collection service, should anyone require assistance, please do contact CTLA and one of our customer service advisors who will be happy to help. The charity sector has suffered a huge loss from the impact of Covid-19 as many of our fundraising streams have been dissolved. Donations are always gratefully received to assist the charity – please see our media channels for ways in which to give your support."

<https://www.uckfieldfm.co.uk/2020/the-guide/new-minibus-for-lewes/>



Stratford-upon-Avon Expands UBUS Service

Stratford Herald reports that "Improvements to Stratford District's UBUS transport service came into effect this week. The dial-a-ride service is designed to help those with mobility problems who may find it difficult to access public transport or those who live in an area with no or limited public transport. All towns and parishes in

the district will now have a UBUS operating every day Monday to Friday and the service will operate from 9.30am until 7pm, except between 2.30pm and 16.30pm on school days. All UBUS vehicles now have 16 seats, though whilst social distancing remains in place only five passengers per UBUS are permitted and all must wear masks unless exempt. The UBUS booking centre is now open between 8.30am and 6pm on the same telephone number 01789 264491, while bookings can also be made by emailing ubus@stratford-dc.gov.uk or by text to 01536 609122. Fares on the service are £4 single and £6 return while Warwickshire County Council Concessionary bus passes are valid for travel on the service."

<https://www.stratford-herald.com/113115-boost-ubus-dial-ride-service.html>



Yellow Buses reach to Community in South East Dorset
Route One reports that "Yellow Coaches and Yellow Buses in Bournemouth are assisting a Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council initiative to deliver food parcels to families in the community during the half term break. The initiative, called 'Together We Can', is a coordinated effort to support vulnerable people during the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak, which began in March. It works in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector organisations, community groups and residents. Council staff allocate volunteers to residents needing help and support. The operator, which runs a fleet of 16 coaches and 110 buses, says it is delivering food parcels to 439 families during the half term break across the BCP Conurbation. 'We are delighted to assist in this programme,' says Managing Director at Yellow Coaches and Yellow Buses David

Squire. 'We realise the difficulties the struggles that many families are facing during the pandemic and as the locally owned, locally managed bus company, we are proud to play a small part in assisting local families. I am immensely proud of my staff for getting involved with this project and to those that have volunteered to assist.' BCP Councillor Nicola Greene, Portfolio Holder for COVID Resilience, adds: 'I am extremely proud of the efforts of all those who have stepped up to prepare food parcels, staff the phone lines, plan the distribution and deliver these essential packages to families all across the BCP area this half term. We've seen a brilliant effort from all those involved to make sure those children most in need don't go hungry. A huge thank you to Yellow Buses for taking part and helping to distribute food parcels – what fantastic support.'"

<https://www.route-one.net/people/yellow-buses-does-its-bit-for-the-bcp-community/>



OWLS Community Car Scheme back in Flight

Swavesey Parish Council has announced that "OWLS Community Car Scheme is recommencing its service to vulnerable residents of Over, Willingham, Longstanton and Swavesey on Monday 5th October. As we have a reduced number of drivers who are happy to return to voluntary driving at this time, journeys will be limited to medical ones that include one-way only trips to hospitals. Drivers are being provided with all the necessary PPE equipment and will be working under strict new operating instructions. Regular reviews will assess whether it is possible to extend the types of journeys we offer and indeed whether it continues to be safe to operate if local infections rise significantly."

<http://www.swavesey.org.uk/owls-community-car-scheme/>

OWLS Community Car Scheme



Exmouth Community Car Scheme Seeks New Volunteers

Exmouth Journal writes: "Prior to the coronavirus lockdown, Exmouth Community Car Service had more than 20 drivers covering 25 journeys a week. The service was re-started at the end of July, with new Covid-19 restrictions in place, with just 12 drivers average 45 journeys a week. Drivers who can spare their time to help residents get to and from medical appointments are now being urged to bolster the service. Phil Rackstraw, chairman of Exmouth Community Car Service, said they 'urgently' need more volunteers who will be paid expenses in return. He added: 'Our service is not just about providing a ride. We try to match drivers to clients so that the client feels safe and many look forward to a little natter with a familiar face every week or so.' For more information, ring 01395 266062 between 9am and 1pm Monday to Friday."

<https://www.exmouthjournal.co.uk/news/volunteers-plea-from-community-car-service-1-6891615>



Fenland Association for Community Transport ready to Freeze

Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT) is to host a community fridge at its Hub in March, reveals the Cambridge Times: "March will hold its

first community fridge, which will enable the local community to access free food sourced from farms, cafes, stores and supermarkets that would otherwise have gone to waste. The project was launched by the Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT), made possible through section 106 monies for environmental projects approved by Fenland District Council. During the first national coronavirus lockdown, FACT provided a home delivery service for the elderly and vulnerable, delivering food and other essentials to households from March, Wisbech, Ely and Wisbech to Whittlesey, Peterborough and St Ives."

<https://www.cambsimes.co.uk/news/town-bid-to-tackle-hunger-with-community-fridge-1-6929779>



South Pennine CT Cited in House of Commons!

South Pennine CT has Tweeted: "We are thrilled to have been mentioned at Prime Minister's Questions this afternoon. We are glad that rural buses are featuring high on the agenda at Westminster and look forward to seeing more funding and initiatives for buses in the years to come."

<https://twitter.com/SouthPennineCT/status/1331601348324958212>



To conclude this newsletter, TAS Director John Taylor has contributed this 'Think Piece'. We would welcome any comments or feedback. John has been one of the pre-eminent practitioners of accessible, flexible and community-based transport in UK since 1977, with early experience encompassing the design, operational, legal and technical aspects of CT. His consultancy career stretches back to 1986; before joining TAS in 1994, John was a freelance consultant specialising in community, rural and accessible transport.



Has DfT Lost its Way with Consultations? asks John Taylor

Maybe I'm becoming grumpy in my old age, but this week's DfT report on the consultation undertaken for the Future of Transport regulatory review would have had me spluttering into my cornflakes if I hadn't given up breakfast as a means of containing my waistline, which appears to be one of the few growth areas under COVID-19.

Transport nerds (sorry professionals) will recall that DfT has been posing some big picture questions about the "future of transport" in order to create a "21st century transport system" and "secure the UK's position as a world-leading innovator, decarbonising the transport system for the benefit of all society". This sort of stuff reminds of a Private Eye front cover from the late 1960s with Tony Benn celebrating "It's Hover Britain" (i.e. the anticipated ubiquity of the UK's world-beating transport

innovation - the Hovercraft, along with the Maglev, the Tilting Train and Concorde).

The consultation covered three issues causing problems for the regulators:

- J Micromobility (i.e. e-scooters, Segways, hoverboards and the like) – should these be allowed on roads, cycle paths, pavements and if so under what circumstances (speed limits, lights, insurance, helmets, etc.)?
- J Buses, taxis and private hire vehicles – primarily focusing on flexible bus services and what commitments to be obtained from operators registering DRT services
- J Mobility as a Service – again concerned with how to regulate this field which is clearly the next big thing, in that everyone thinks they understand what it is until they come to try to define it.

As an afterthought, the DfT tagged on some other topics on which they sought correspondents' views:

- J How regulation can ensure inclusive future transport – covering all characteristics protected under Equalities legislation [What a surprise, the main response was that continuing in-depth engagement with groups representing the different stakeholders is the key, followed by more effective application of s29 of the Equalities Act 2010 (prohibition against discriminatory actions in delivering public functions) and holding public sector organisations to their legal duties to have 'due regard' to the broad spectrum of needs.]
- J Enabling trials of new modes – would it be useful to introduce a statutory exemption power (i.e. allow the Minister to disapply transport law) to facilitate trials of new technologies. Given the breadth of the topic (Road Traffic, Highways, Construction & Use, Highway Code, Traffic Signs.....) it wasn't surprising that respondents struggled to come up with useful insights. Introducing an entirely new mode requires something more radical than The Bus Services in Trial Areas Act 1981, which enabled deregulation to be tested in parts of Devon, Hereford & Worcester and Norfolk (all remote enough from Westminster for there to be minimal risk of repercussions). I suppose that allowing autonomous

(driverless) vehicles in Milton Keynes follows the same risk-management thought pattern.

- J Local leadership of new transport services – in the ‘too hard’ category for most respondents as there wasn’t a tick box for ‘some / any’ leadership instead of the ongoing futile and energy-sapping arguments about bus service franchising as an excuse for ‘no progress’.
- J Anything we’ve forgotten – it appears not.

It is easy to be cynical about these exercises, which is of course helpful for this article. I am conscious of recent judicial review court cases on public authority consultation [as a consultant I read this stuff so you don’t have to] which have identified various actual and potential points of failure. The successful challenge to Cambridgeshire County Council’s plan to withdraw bus subsidies without consulting appropriately is a case in point. The latest case appealed (around fracking) concerns civil servants’ failure to put all the consultation response points in front of ministers making decisions, rather than what they felt to be the key or critical ones. I suspect this has influenced the DfT on ‘play safe’ grounds to give us a version of the full, collective stream of consciousness from the consultees. It is not a pretty sight.

Returning to the main issues, the section on flexible bus services most raised my blood pressure. The DfT acknowledged that the current regulations were designed at a time before smartphones and when there was a clear distinction between buses, taxis and PHVs, but then started off on the wrong foot by framing its first question around the three categories of flexible bus service identified in current guidance – ‘Many to Many’; ‘Many to One’ and ‘One to Many’. Not for the first time, the summary starts: “responses were split between those in favour of regulating and those against.” This demonstrates a fundamental difficulty with consulting on regulatory options when consultees are not provided with information about costs. In its 86 pages, the word ‘cost’ is only mentioned 23 times; 11 of these are in the section on flexible bus services and most are general comments about the cost-effectiveness of different service characteristics. The cost

and effectiveness of regulation, to the taxpayer, the operator and ultimately to the user is only mentioned twice. It is easy to ask for something which is set out as cost-free.

The polarisation between those who want everything nailed down and those relying on the market to provide an acceptable result is made clear from the responses to the DfT asking “How do you think we should define the area of operation for a flexible bus service?” – NOT, note, “Is it necessary to pre-define flexible bus service operating areas?”. A common view was that the operational area should be a geographical area [!]. Responses were split between those wanting it to have a constraining boundary and fixed start and end-points and those who considered it should be determined by demand. Insights for the DfT included that serving local transport hubs would be a good idea, as would research to understand demand. The mind boggles (or at least mine does) at the concept of an operator planning a service that doesn’t serve key locations, not doing any research into demand, and having to be forced by regulation to tell would be passengers the locations where the service is operating.

Similar polarised contributions in respect of the need for a 20 minute time window for passenger pick-ups, whether to require real-time progress updates, notice periods for registration, record keeping requirements and DBS vetting for drivers. On fares, there was a general view that fares should be known in advance and that surge pricing is not welcomed. However, every single model of price-setting was considered – distance-based, zonal, peak/off-peak, equivalent to bus fares, midway between bus fares and Uber [incidentally given the connection between ‘ber’ and world domination, I’ve often been puzzled as to why this brand identity was considered positive, but maybe they aren’t bothered about their strategy being so obvious].

The question that really got me despairing was “In your opinion, how could the carriage of more ad-hoc bus passengers be encouraged without impacting negatively on the service received by passengers who have booked in advance?”. To answer this

constructively requires a pretty good working knowledge of the practicalities of planning and operating DRT services and it is clear that many respondents lacked such insight. "A dominant view was that ad-hoc journeys should have to be accepted through an app, by checking how disruptive it would be for existing passengers." How do they think DRT scheduling software, whether app or PC based, works? "Several respondents felt that no ad-hoc passengers should be accepted on flexible bus services" but "Many respondents felt that ad-hoc passengers and last-minute bookings were essential because people require on-demand services" and as a compromise "Several respondents expressed that ad-hoc passengers could be catered for by providing a greater frequency of services when the demand is highest.". Wow! However, "A recurring theme was that flexible buses should not accommodate for ad-hoc passengers at all. It was felt that this could lead to empty buses during off-peak hours and would not be cost-effective." Did you understand what operating model these respondents had in mind?

I could go on, but shooting fish in a barrel like this gets distasteful. My underlying point here is the uselessness of broad level and unfocused consultation around transport. Just how are these responses going to help the DfT? How do they provide insight into challenging questions of prioritisation? The very fact that they posed these questions demonstrates how far away from the real experience of consumers and operators the team in Westminster is. This was pretty much exclusively a 'tick the box' exercise to confirm that they have 'consulted widely'. The 1,066 responses represents a lot of people's valuable time spent both responding and analysing and I challenge whether this is cost-effective.

And there is a message here for the community transport sector which has itself been bedevilled with duff consultation processes, both of its own making but also imposed by funding authorities. I've lost count of the number of dial-a-ride surveys that report high levels of consumer satisfaction when they don't survey eligible non-users, or questions about appropriate dial-a-ride fares which provide no reference points for respondents (who may well not

know what the current going rate is for either buses or taxis). Asking people whether they like motherhood and apple pie is lazy and wasteful, as well as fostering a genuine sense amongst consultees that the survey they are being asked to complete is not going to change anything. Designing useful surveys may not be rocket science but it does involve hard work and lots of brainpower.

A further concern for the community transport sector is that if the DfT has so little practical and critical understanding of flexible bus services and DRT which it so regularly promotes and targets for funding, most recently through the Rural Mobility Fund (announcements of the winners expected shortly), how much do we think they understand about CT? I know that the CTA works hard to liaise with the Department (and their opposite numbers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) but it can but help if the rest of us do our best to send them examples of good practice, success stories, positive social value outcomes and invite them (post-COVID) to come and see for themselves.

I note that having completed this consultation, the DfT is now moving on to a call for evidence in respect of its rural strategy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence>

Whilst this is clearly an opportunity for further magical thinking, widespread and cost-free, I don't think we can avoid responding if we want to keep them down to earth.



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email john.atkins@taspartnership.com